

Message Text

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FOR FBO AND NEA/EX FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFSP ABLD EG

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE

1. AS YOU KNOW, THE ERSTWHILE US CHIEF OF MISSION'S RESIDENCE IN GARDEN CITY WAS GIVEN UP TWO YEARS AGO. THERE WERE DOUBTLESS GOOD REASONS FOR THIS AT THE TIME. AMONG OTHERS, THE HEAD OF THE US INTERESTS SECTION HAD USED THE DCM'S RESIDENCE IN ZAMALEK SINCE 1967 AND I HAD NO OPTION ON ARRIVAL BUT TO DO SO AS WELL. A NEW USG-GOE RELATIONSHIP IS RAPIDLY EMERGING. CLEARLY, THE ZAMALEK RESIDENCE IS UNSATISFACTORY FOR THE FUNCTIONS EXPECTED OF AN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO. I AM NOT SPEAKING OF ANYTHING GRANDIOSE, BUT SOLELY OF WHAT PAST AMERICAN AMBASSADORS HERE NEEDED AND HAD TO DISCHARGE THEIR FUNCTIONS.

2. FROM A REPRESENTATIONAL POINT OF VIEW, THE ZAMALEK RESIDENCE IS TOTALLY INADEQUATE. IT LACKS THE DINING ROOM AND DRAWING ROOM SPACE TO CONDUCT ESSENTIAL REPRESENTATIONAL FUNCTIONS OF THE NECESSARY SIZE. WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, IT IS FURNISHED WITH A MOTELY COLLECTION OF OLD, HAND-ME-DOWN FURNITURE. THE ORIENTAL RUNGS, TAKEN FROM THE OLD RESIDENCE, WERE NOT INTENDED FOR THE ZAMALEK ROOMS AND HAVE HAD TO BE ROLLED UP ON THE SIDES. THE WHOLE EFFECT IS UNSIGHTLY, BUT THERE ARE NO ADEQUATE ALTERNATIVE FLOOR COVERINGS AVAILABLE LOCALLY FOR PURCHASE.

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3. FROM A SECURITY POINT OF VIEW, AS THE BEIRUT RSO HAS ALREADY POINTED OUT, WITH HIGH RISES ON THREE SIDES AND AN EXPOSED EMPTY LOT ON THE 4TH, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PROTECT.

4. RUSSILLO AND METCALFE, WHO WERE SENT BY FBO TO EXAMINE AND MADE RECOMMENDATIONS INTER ALIA ON THE GIZA PROPERTY, HAVE BEEN HERE AND HAVE DONE AN EXCELLENT JOB. THE GIZA PROPERTY IS OBVIOUSLY EMINENTLY SUITED FOR AN AMBASSADORIAL RESIDENCE. TEAM HAS DISCUSSED WITH ME SEVERAL OPTIONS, INCLUDING RENOVATING THE INTERIOR OF THE PRESENT STRUCTURE ON THE GIZA PROPERTY. WHILE I WILL CERTAINLY WANT TO LOOK AT ALL OPTIONS, I HAVE PRETTY MUCH CONCLUDED THAT WE SHOULD RAZE THE PRESENT STRUCTURE AND BUILD A NEW ONE. SIMPLE RENOVATION OF THE INTERIOR MAY INDEED MAKE IT SOMEWHAT MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN IT IS NOW, BUT WILL NEVER TRANSFORM IT INTO AN EFFICIENT RESIDENCE. IN MY JUDGMENT, IT WILL AT BEST END UP AS A MUSEUM-LIKE STRUCTURE WITH THE MUSEUM KEEPER'S QUARTERS ON THE ROOF. IN ANY EVENT, WHETHER WE GO THE NEW BUILDING OR RENOVATION ROUTE, I THINK WE MUST RECKON WITH A MINIMUM OF TWO AND ONE-HALF TO THREE YEARS BEFORE COMPLETION. I HAVE HEARD LOWER FIGURES, BUT DO NOT BELIEVE THEM. LOCAL BUILDING MATERIALS WILL BE IN SHORT SUPPLY THE NEXT YEAR OR TWO AS THE GOE GIVES PRIORITY ATTENTION TO THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SUEZ CANAL CITIES.

5. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I WOULD LIKE TO BE AUTHORIZED TO LOOK FOR A NEW TEMPORARY RESIDENCE ON A RENTAL BASIS. IT IS DETRIMENTAL TO OUR IMAGE LOCALLY TO HAVE THE AMBASSADOR HAMSTRUNG BY INADEQUATE RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES. GOOD BUILDINGS OF THE TYPE REQUIRED ARE CURRENTLY IN SHORT SUPPLY, BUT I BELIEVE WE MUST MAKE THE ATTEMPT. I WILL ALSO WANT TO LOOK AT SOME OF OUR MAADI PROPERTIES, BUT THE LARGEST OF THESE (WHICH IS THE ONLY POSSIBILITY) IS NOW OCCUPIED BY THE NAMRU CHIEF AND WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL THE COMING SUMMER. AS FOR FURNISHINGS, I RECOMMEND THAT AN FBO INTERIOR DECORATOR BE SENT TO CAIRO TO ASSIST IN DETERMINING SUCH FURNISHINGS AS SHOULD BE PROVIDED FOR THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE ONCE WE HAVE SETTLED UPON WHERE THIS WILL BE.

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